National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

Summary of the NIAID "Immunological Basis for Antigen-Specific Asthma/Allergies Therapeutic Strategies" workshop sponsored by the Division of Allergy, Immunology, and Transplantation (DAIT)

November 14, 2005

On November 14, 2005, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) Division of Allergy, Immunology, and Transplantation (DAIT) sponsored a workshop entitled the "*Immunologic Basis of Antigen-Specific Asthma/Allergy Therapeutic Strategies Meeting*." NIAID is a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Workshop participants included international experts in the field of asthma and allergy immunotherapy. Keynote presentations were made by Dr. David H. Broide of the University of California at San Diego on "*Basic Immunology Relevant to Allergen Immunotherapy*," by Dr. Martin D. Chapman from Indoor Biotechnologies, Inc., on "*Allergens Relevant to Allergen Immunotherapy*," and by Dr. Phillip S. Norman of the Johns Hopkins Asthma and Allergy Center on "*Clinical Aspects of Allergen Immunotherapy*." These presentations were followed by three roundtable discussions on immunotherapy topics including basic immunology, allergens and clinical applications. The roundtable discussions focused on developing recommendations for future areas of research that will advance our knowledge and understanding of immunotherapy for asthma and allergic disease and identify barriers to such advancement.

In order to advance clinical trials using chemically well-defined allergens and reagents, support is needed for core facilities that will use innovative techniques to isolate, purify, and identify novel allergens from various sources. Additionally, funds are needed to support the identification and characterization of peptides containing T cell epitopes that induce anergy in allergen-specific effector T cells, or activate allergen-specific regulatory T cells.

The panel identified the need for future clinical trials to examine and compare the clinical effectiveness of subcutaneous allergen immunotherapy (SCIT) and sublingual allergen immunotherapy (SLIT) particularly with respect to clinical effectiveness, the short- and long-term therapeutic benefits and the underlying mechanisms associated with these benefits.

(For a full report of the meeting, please click here)